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BLADE.

OF THE IMMORTAL



Mirror of the Soul

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BLADE.

OF THE IMMORTAL



original story

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation

Dana Lewis & Toren Smith

lettering and artwork

Tomoko Salto



Mirror of the Soul



DARK HORSE MANGA™

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION



The Swastika

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "wellfare," from *su* — "well" + *asti* "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coins), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *swastika*, which moves in a counterclockwise direction and is called the *manji* in Japanese. The arms of the *swastika*, which point in a clockwise direction, are generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. The *swastika* generally stands for night, and often for magical practices. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the

use of the symbol in this story. These meanings did not exist until after 1930.

The Artwork

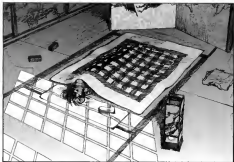
The creator of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Normally, We staneez manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and re-pasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-eraged panels or pages were used.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue

Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the illustrations, we decided to leave those in their original Japanese. We hope readers will view the untouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in typical samurai manga and is considered to be one of the features that has made *Blade* such a hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, with some characters speaking in the mannered style of old Japan while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.



SHADOWS





SO
YOU'RE
REALLY
HEADED
BACK...?



ARE...

HOW
IS
KINGU-
JOMMO?



I HEARD
HE COLLAPSED
AT THE
BANQUET.
NOTHING
SERIOUS, I
HOPE...?

NO.
PROBABLY
JUST
TOO MUCH
SAKE.

THE
MASTER
DOESN'T
LOOK IT, BUT
HE TURNED
SIXTY
THIS YEAR.



STILL...
IT'S
JUST NOT
RIGHT.
ONLY HE
HERE TO
SEE YOU
OFF.

SHALL
I ASK
THE
YOUNG
MIS-
TRESS...?



NO...
IT'S
FINE.

THE
CEREMONY
AND THE
BANQUET
WERE
PROBABLY
HARD ON HER.
I WANT TO
LET HER
REST.



NOW
THAT
THE YOUNG
LADY'S
YOUR WIFE...



...IT'S
NONE OF
MY BUSINESS.
I KNOW. BUT...
CAN I SAY
ONE THING.
ANOTSU-SAN...?



THE
YOUNG
LADY'S
REAL JOB
ISN'T TO BE
YOUR WIFE.

IT'S TO
BEAR AND
RAISE
YOUR CHILDREN.



SHE'S
STILL A
SAMURAI
WOMAN.
AT THE CORE,
SHE'S A LOT
STRONGER
THAN YOU
THINK.

IT'S NOT
FAIR TO
TREAT HER
AS IF SHE'S ..
DAMAGED.
GOOD. IN MY
OPINION,
IT WILL
ONLY MAKE
THINGS
WORSE.



YOU'RE
RIGHT.

I
WOULDN'T
FORGET
THAT.



ANYWAY,
COME
BACK FOR
HER AS
SOON AS
YOU CAN.

YES...
I SHOULD
BE BACK
IN ABOUT
A MONTH-
RIGHT.











.....?
H..
KAGA...?

IT'S...
KAGA...!



.....?
H..
KAGA...?



.....
H..
KAGA...?



SO..
SO, THIS
MOUNTAIN...

IT WAS
MOUNT
HAKUSANE!



IN OTHER WORDS...
I JUST USED
MY LAST BIT
OF STRENGTH
TO CLIMB
OVER ROUTE
HAKUSAN, THE
ONE ROUTE
EVERYONE
WHO GOES
TO KAGA
AVOIDS.

















YOU'RE
SO RELAX!
I COULDN'T
TELL. ARE YOU
REALLY ASANO
TAKAYOSHI'S
DAUGHTER?!



She's
Easy?



THAT'S
RIGHT!

I AM
HERE!!



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?

I'M
LOOKING
FOR...

WHAT
AM I...?!!
ARE YOU
RED-
DING?!

POW!
I'M...



.....

.....





REMEMBER THIS,
ANOTSU
FORGOT-
HIDE-IT



NOW AND
FOREVER,
IF I
APPEAR
BEFORE
YOU ..

...IT'S
BECAUSE
I'VE GOT
BUSINESS
WITH
YOU



YOU
GET
IT ?

I THINK
SO...YOU'RE
PLANNING
TO STAB ME
IN THE
BACK



PLEASE!
DON'T
HURT
ME.



NO
IN
FACT...



HOW'D
YOU LIKE
TO *KEEP* ME
IN THE
ITTO-
RYO?

WELL...?



*I
REFUSE.*



IT SEEMS
YOU HAVE
YOUR ENERGY
BACK, SO
I'M
LEAVING.



WAIT!

DAMN IT!
JUST HOLD
ON A SEC!!



LISTEN, YOU
I JUST SAID
SOMETHING
PRETTY DAMN
BROODER AND
UNEXPECTED.
IF I DO SAY SO
MYSELF!

AT VERY
LEAST, ACT
SURPRISED
OR SOME-
THING!

WHY?
IT WAS
TOTALLY
PREDICT-
ABLE.



YOU'VE
LEARNED
ENOUGH
ABOUT ME
THAT I
ASSUMED...

THE
NEXT
TIME YOU
SHOWED UP...
YOU WOULDN'T
BE TOUGH
ENOUGH TO
ATTACK
DIRECTLY.



I
ASSUMED
YOU'D
TRY SOME
SORT OF
TRICK.

FOR
INSTANCE...
Pretending
to
switch
sides.



HHEY!
WAIT
A--

JUST
TYPICAL
WOMAN'S
THINKING.
NO
SURPRISE
AT ALL.

STILL,
IT WAS
WISE OF
YOU
TO LEAVE
YOUR
SWORD
BEHIND.



I'M NOT
LEAVING!
IF YOU
WANT
PROOF...

I LEFT
~~IT~~—
I MEAN,
I LEFT MY
BODY-
GUARD
IN EDO!



YOU
CROSSED THE
MOUNTAIN-
SIDE?
A SINGLE
WOMAN
ALONE?

Y...
YES.



IT'S
LIKE YOU
PRAISE YOUR
COURAGE,
BUT...

YOU
FOOL!
YOU WERE
COMPLETELY OUT
OF YOUR DEPTH!
NO WONDER YOU
ENDED UP BROKE
AND STARVING!



YOU
SAID YOU
WANT
TO JOIN
THE
JIN-DO.

THEN
LET ME
TELL YOU
MORE
ABOUT
US.



THE
JIN-DO IS A
SWORD SCHOOL...
AND NOT A
SWORD SCHOOL.
A TRADITION...
AND NOT A
TRADITION.

WE OFFER
NO
MEMBERSHIPS,
NO SECRET
TECHNIQUES.

IT'S UP
TO EACH
FIGHTER IF HE
WANTS TO BUY
IN, OR NOT.
QUALIFICATIONS...?
ONLY ONE-
THE
SWORD!

WE DON'T
NEED
SWORDSMEN
WHO
LOSE,
AND SO...

YOU
KNOW
BETTER THAN
ANYONE
THAT YOU
DON'T
QUALIFY.

THERE
ANY
QUESTION?

YEAH!
PLENTY!

THERE
ARE
LOTS OF
WAYS YOU
COULD USE
A GIRL.

ALREADY
WORK
THAT
SORT OF
THING.

HOW
ABOUT
COOK-
ING?
HEATING
THE
BATH?

I'LL
DO ANY-
THING!
ANY-
THING!

I'M
LIKE
A POOR
ORPHANED
KITTEN,
HANGING
ALONE
IN THE
WIND-
BLOWN
GRASS!

YES!
YOU JUST
ASKED
IT!
BEIDES,
THANKS TO
YOU...

IF YOU
CALL
YOURSELF
A MAN,
TAKE
RESPONS-
ABILITY
FOR--

SHUT
UP.







ALREADY
SAWS... BY
AH-H

DON'T
MOVE!
CONTROL
YOURSELF!



SHOWING
UP HERE
WHEN
YOU
DID ...

BAD
LUCK
FOLLOWS
YOU
WOMAN.

BUT I'LL
SAY IT
AGAIN--IT'S
A BLESSING
IN DISGUISE
YOU CAME
UNARMED.



WHETHER
YOU'D
DRAWN
YOUR SWORD
AHEAD?
THESE MEN
TO PROVE
YOUR
WORDS...

...OR
LOCKED
WITH THEM TO
TRY AND KILL
ME. YOU
WOULD HAVE
DIED HERE
TODAY.



BUT
INSTEAD
YOU SHALL
LIVE...
AND
LEARN.

SO CURL
UP IN THE
ROOTS OF A
TREE, AND
WAIT.



VERY
WELL...
YES!

I AM
AND YOU
ACKNOWLEDGE
HEAD
OF THE
OTD-100.



THOSE
WHO
FACE ME
KNOWING
THAT
NAME...

...TAKE
UP ARMS
AGAINST THE
THOUSAND
FOLLOWERS
BOUND
TO ME.



YOU
INTERFERE
WITH MY
GRANDFATHER'S
DREAM AND
BLOCK MY OWN
PATH TO THE
FUTURE.



BLADE

OF THE IMMORTAL



Asotaro is a swordsman and leader of the rogue Yakuza. He has slashed his blade for the moment to join in marriage. But for a man of action such as Asotaro, the formal traditions of feudal Japan can be just as tense and fraught with hidden dangers as the battlefield. And while Asotaro may indulge in a moment of peace, his enemies are not at rest, among them Kio, who has stalked him for years to avenge the murder of her parents at the hands of the Ebisuya. Asotaro had best make sure that if he stops to rest, his sword, he doesn't end up losing his body!

Shoichi Sawano is recognized worldwide as one of the leading talent masters of graphic design, and *Blade of the Immortal* is a powerful showcase of his talent and imagination.

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A movie poster for the anime 'Blade of the Immortal'. The central figure is a man with dark hair and a white headband, wearing a white shirt with a red sash. He is holding a sword vertically in front of his face. The background is a bright yellow-green. The title 'BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL' is at the top in red and black. The Japanese title '無敵の仁人' is on the left, and 'Mirror of the Soul' is at the bottom right.

HIROAKI SAMURA

BLADE.

OF THE IMMORTAL

無敵の仁人

Mirror
of the
Soul



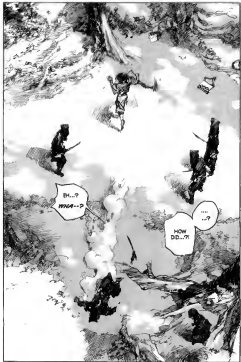
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MOURNING SHADOWS







EH...?

WHA--?

HOW
DID...?

...
...?















THE
HYO-HYO



THOSE MEN WHO
KILLED MY FATHER,
ALONG DOZENS,
TWO HUNDRED AND
AND COUNTED. BUT
DOUBT LESS THAN
TWENTY OF THEM.

...GIVING ALL WHO
STOOD IN THEIR
WAY THE SAME,
SINGLE CHOICE...
"DEATH OR DISE."



JUST TWO YEARS,
AND NOW THEY
FOLLOWED ALONG
MORE THAN A THOU-
SAND IN TWO ALONG.

LATE, HE DECLARED:
"THE SECOND SCHOOL
WITHOUT A STYLE."
"THE WILD APPRENTICE."

AND BEFORE
MY EYES, THE
FOUNDATION
AND THE
PINNACLE...



...AND THE
MOUNTAIN











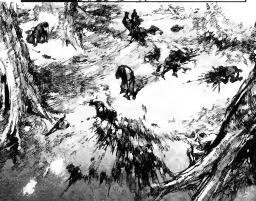




RYAAAAAAAAA!

























KENSUI-
DONO

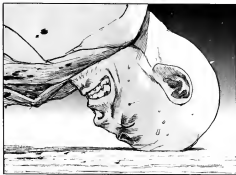




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PATH OF SHADOWS







ANOTHER
DANCE...
YESTERDAY,
I...

DURING
THE
WEDDING...
YOU SAW
ME LEAVE
MY SEAT?

YES,
I REMEM-
BER.

AT...
AT THAT
TIME...

AN
EMBASSY...
TOLD
ME...

"C...
CUT
YOUR TIES
WITH THE
HYD-
RIDO..."

"...AND
TAKE
THEIR
LEADER'S...
LIFE."

AN
EMBASSY...
FROM
WHOP?





ANDYU-
ANDU...



IF...
NO...
DON'T
WORRY.

I
WOV'T
DE...
UNTIL I'M
DONE.



ANDYU-
ANDU...
PATHETIC IT
MAY SOUND,
BUT...

I HAVE
BUT ONE...
~~REMAINING~~
STRIKE AT IT,
AND I AM
POWERLESS
TO RESIST.



THAT
WEAKNESS
IS...

NO.
I CAN
GUESS.



ONLY
ONE
THING
COULD
TIP THE
SCALE...

...FOR
ONE WHO
TREASURES
HIS
PROMISES
AS MUCH
AS YOU.



HERONA-
DONO'S
LIFE.



HERO
HERO
HERO

Y-
YES...



I HAD
PLANNED...
TO TELL
YOU
LATER.

BUT HER
ILLNESS...
IT'S FAR
WORSE THAN
YOU EVEN
SUSPECT.



I WON'T
TELL YOU ITS
NAME,
BUT IF SHE
DOESN'T GET
A SPECIAL
MEDICINE...

...IN TIME
SHE BEGINS
TO COUGH UP
BLOOD. THEN
IN LESS THAN
THREE DAYS,
HER BREATH
WOULD STOP
FOREVER.



!!

WHAT
MATTERS...

NOT
HERA! NOT
CHERIE!
IT'S
WESTER...
HERO-
DONO!

IT'S
A HARD
DRUG...AND
IN 7-TIME IT
WILL BELAND
HER. BUT...
HER LIFE
COMES
FIRST...

AND
IT'S HER...
ONLY
HOPE...



"BEFORE...
MY OLD MASTER
FOUNDED THE
JOSHIMOTO-DO...
HE WAS SWORN
SERVANT TO
THE L-LORD OF
MAEDA AME.

"THAT BOND
LIFT LO...
GET HER DRUGS...
DESPITE THE BAN.
INDEED, THE DAY
Y-YOU ARRIVED AT
OUR PLACE...
I HAD GONE TO
COLLECT THEM."



BUT...
BUT BEFORE
AN ORDER OF
THE JOSHIMOTO,
SUCH BONES
ARE...
AS NOTHING
THE TRISTARY
TOLD ME...

"KEEP
BUYING
YOUR DRUGS,
OR BE REFUSED
THEM.
HENCEFORTH,
ALL HANDS
ON YOUR
KNEES!"

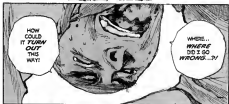


.....
.....



LAUGH
AT ME...
IF YOU
WISH.

I NO
LONGER
UNDERSTAND...
ANYTHING.







KENSHU
POW...
.....
.....
.....



NO
MATTER
HOW
MUCH YOU
CARED
FOR
HER...

...YOU
WERE A
FUCK
TO BETRAY
YOUR
OWN
HONOR.



A WARRIOR
CANNOT SERVE
TWO MASTERS.
IT'S MAKING THAT
CHOICE THAT
MEASURES OUR
WORTH. IF THE TRUE
PATRIOTS OF THIS
LAND HEARD YOU
WERE A PRISONER
OF YOUR
FEELINGS...

...THEY
WOULD BE
SHOCKED.



.....
.....
.....

AND
YET...



WHAT
I SEE IN
YOU
NOW...

...IS WHAT
I SAW IN
MYSELF,
BUT FOUR
DAYS
PAST.



"MY OWN
HONOR I
THOUGHT SO
UNSHAKEABLE.
MY DREAM,
MY
COMRADES...

"AND
THAT
DISPICABLE
~~BRANDY~~
POWERFUL,
WATCHFUL,
PUSHING
ALL ELSE
ASIDE."



REBEL-
JOEY
TODAY YOU
COMMITTED A
GRIFVIOUS
ERROR.

YOU
STRAYED
FROM THE
PATH.
A SAMURAI
SHOULD
ALWAYS
FOLLOW.



BUT
THAT
CRIME IS
NOT
ONE...

...THAT
I HAVE ANY
RIGHT TO
CONDEMN.



KENSU-
ACHA...!



I WILL
BE
YOUR
SECOND.

Chok











LISTEN...
IT'S A RULE
OF THE JOKUJ.
AFTER
AFTERNOON
PRACTICE AND
BEFORE
THE EVENING
BATH...

...HOZUE
ALWAYS
REPORTS
TO KENZUJI
ON THE
DAY'S
PROGRESS.



SO...
SOON
THOUGH...



...THIS
WILL BE
DISCOVER-
ED.

AND
BEFORE
IT IS...



...IT
WOULD
BE WISE
FOR YOU
TO BE
GONE.



IF YOU
USE THE
FRONT GATE,
THEY'LL
TRACK YOU
EASILY.

LEAVE
FROM THE
BACK AND
FOLLOW THE
SILHOUETTE
OF THE
MOUNTAIN.



....
MY
THANKS.



KENSEI-
JACHO'S
ROAD
FOR
YOU



...THEY
ALL
COME
TO
PASS.



I AM A
SAMURAI,
AND YOUR
WIFE!



WHY
WIFE OF
HONOR
WOULD NOT
SURRENDER
EVERYTHING
FOR HER
HUSBAND?















I
WAITED
SO LONG
FOR THAT
MAN TO
APPEAR.

SO
VERY
LONG...



THE
MAN WHO
COULD
LEAD ME...
NO...

...LEAD
ME FROM
THIS
DESOLATE
MOUNTAIN.



BUT
YOU KNOW,
FATHER?
AT THE SAME
TIME, I SOMEHOW
KNEW, FROM...
OH, I CAN'T
REMEMBER
WHEN.

...THAT
IF HE EVER
DID APPEAR,
HE WOULD
JUST BE
ANOTHER
DREAM.



AND SO...
ISN'T THAT
RIGHT?

WHY
SHOULD
HE COME
AFTER
TWENTY
YEARS...?



FOR
TWENTY LONG,
LONELY YEARS...



...YOU
LIVED IN
THESE REMOTE
MOUNTAINS
JUST TO KEEP
YOUR PROMISE
TO MY
GRANDFATHER.

AND LOOK
AT WHAT
BECAME
OF YOU.
YOU FOOL.
FOOLISH
MAN.



BUT,
NO...
IT'S NOT
JUST
YOU.

IT'S ALL
OF US,
TRAPPED
HERE BY
DASH AND
OBLIGA-
TION...



TO TELL
THE
TRUTH...



I KNEW
IT FROM
THE VERY
BEGINNING.
THE ONE
WAY...

...THE
SCAFFLE
WAY.
TO GET
US FREE.







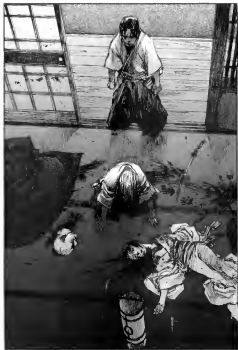
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THORNS









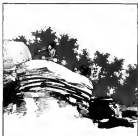














ISN'T IT
ABOUT
TIME
YOU TOLD
ME?

ABOUT
WHAT?

WHAT
YOU WERE
DOING AT
THAT JUNG
LAST NIGHT.



THERE'S
NO
POINT IN
TELLING
YOU.



MAYBE
YOU
DON'T
THINK SO,
BUT I'VE
GOT A
RIGHT
TO KNOW.

I'M
ITTO-
AND
TOO.



WELL,
AND...
YOU?

I
JOINED
KESTER-
GAY!

IS YOUR
MEMORY
SHOT?



LISTEN,
GAIL...



...IF YOU
JUST WANT
TO PRETEND
YOU'RE ONE
OF US TO KILL
ME IN MY
SLEEP...

...GIVE
IT UP,
JACOM.
I DON'T
BLAME YOU,
BUT...



...THERE'S
NO WAY
YOU'RE
EVER
GOING TO
KILL ME.

BESIDES,
EFFECTIVE
YESTERDAY,
I'VE CANCEL-
LED OUR
AGREEMENT
WITH THE
SARAFU.



I'M A
FUGITIVE
NOW.
STAY WITH
ME, AND
YOU'RE A
TARGET,
TOO.

THE
FUTURE'S
BRIGHT.



THERE...
DONE.

ALL
THANKS.



I...I'LL
STILL
FOLLOW
YOU!



YOU'RE
ON-SO-
CERTAIN
I CAN'T
FOLLOW
YOU
RIGHT...?



SOME
DON'T
MATTER IF
I FOLLOW
YOU...
YES?



AND IF
I'M NOT
ONE OF THE
STRONG,
YOU CAN'T
BOSS ME
AROUND.
ANYWAY.

SO I
CAN DO
WHAT I
WANT.



THEY'VE
GOT
PEOPLE
AFTER US.
WE CAN'T USE
THE MAIN
ROADS.



AND
SOMETIMES
THERE
WOULDN'T BE
ANY
ROADS.

I GATHER
YOU CAME
OVER MOUNT
HAWKMAN
WITHOUT
RESTING.



GOOD,
BUT IF YOU
TURN OUT
THIS TIME,
I WON'T
HELP YOU.

IS THAT
ACCEPT-
ABLE...?



.....
.....
YES.











NEVER
THOUGHT
I'D
CLIMB
HAKUSAN
MOUNTAIN.

MUST'VE
WALKED...
TEN JIKU?



AND ALL
I'VE HAD
TO EAT
SINCE
MORNING...

...IS A
MOUTHFUL
OF THAT
DRIED RICE
I BOUGHT
LAST WEEK.



GREAT...I
FINALLY MADE
IT TO JAMGHE.
JUST TO TURN
AROUND AND HEAD
BACK TO EDO...
BROKE, STARVING,
AND NOTHING
GAINED.

HAH...
WAST A
MESS.



CAN HE
REALLY
MAKE IT
TO EDO...?
WELL...
MAYBE
HE CAN.

BUT
NOT...









THAT
"GOLDEN
WASPS" TRICK
OF YOURS...
IT HAS A
SERIOUS
DEFECT.

IT WILL
ALMOST
NEVER
HILL
SHIFT.



AND SO...
IF YOUR
OPPONENT
IS ANY
GOOD AT
ALL...

...YOUR
HEAD WILL
BE FLYING
FROM YOUR
SHOULDERS
BEFORE YOU
CAN EVEN
TURN TO
FLEE.



IT HAS
SOME
MERIT...

...BUT
ONLY IF
YOU HAVE
AN ACCOM-
PLISHED
SWORDSMAN
BACKING
YOU UP.



IF YOU'RE
A PERSON
KNOWING YOUR
STRENGTHS
AND YOUR
WEAKNES-
SES!



















WE NEED
TO CRIST
HAKUSAN
AND REACH
SHERAPAMA BY
TOMORROW
NIGHT.

WE'LL
LEAVE
WHEN THE
RAIN
LIFTS.



IF YOU'VE
GOTTEN
EVERYTHING
OUT OF YOUR
SYSTEM...
THEN SLEEP.



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MIRROR OF THE SOUL

Part 1



YO!
ANYBODY
HERE'N?









SO...WHAT
THE HELL IS
THIS?
NO ROOM...
NO HANDS...!

SHIT...
NOBODY
AT ALL!



HEY!



WHAT
ARE YOU
PUTTING
AWAY FOR?
GET OFF
YOUR
BUTTS!

WE'RE
HITTING
THE
ROAD!

AW, MAN...
I HAVE
A HEART,
DOES.
WE JUST
GIVE YOU
HERE!







WHAT?
WERN
OUT
ALREADY?

VERY
PLAIN??

LIKE
YOU
SHOULD
TALK!



I JUST
THOUGHT
I'D
MENTION
SOME-
THING.

I
NOTICED
HIM
BACK
BEFORE
HE
STARTED.
BUT...



...YOU'RE
REALLY NOT
LOOKING
VERY WELL.











HERE.
TAKE
THIS,
TOO.

I DOUBT
THEY'VE
FOLLOWED US,
BUT YOU MUST
FEEL UNEASY
WITHOUT A
SWORD.



ANY?
BUT...
PLEASE?

NO.
LATER.



B-BUT...
...?













YOU
TOO...

DO I?
NO...

JUST...
TIEED FROM THE
ROAD.



WELL...

WOULD
YOU LIKE TO
COME IN?
JUST A
LITTLE?



OH...
BEFORE I
FORGET.



THERE'S
SOMETHING
I MEANT
TO GIVE
YOU, IF I
EVER SAW
YOU AGAIN.





WHAT'S THIS?



MONEY FOR WHEN
YOU FUD OFF MY
SLOTHFUL CONTRACT.

IT'S THE
REMAINING
BALANCE
THAT I
OWE YOU.



HOW
DO YOU
MAKE A
LIVING?





THIS IS A
TINY VALLEY,
AS YOU
CAN SEE.

THE
VILLAGERS TILL
A LITTLE LAND,
THEY RAISE SOME
SILKMOONS...
BUT THAT'S NOT
ENOUGH TO
LIVE ON.



IT'S
FREIGHT
THAT
KEEPS
THEM
GOING.

UNPAID
AND
DEARER--
~~DEARER~~ AND ~~DEARER~~,
THEY CALL
THEM--
CARRY CARGO
BETWEEN
TOKAWA
AND GUILD.



I WEAVE
A KIND OF
PADDED RAIN
CLOAK THEY
USE, CALLED
AMOROGORI.

AND THEY
BUY THEM
FROM ME.
AND I
SURVIVE.



AND...
WHAT
ELSE?





...WITH
HAND-
CRAFTS.
STOP
LYING.
TELL ME
THE
TRUTH.





HOW
COULD
YOU?!

KAGEHISA
DON'T...!



I AM
NOT...



...AS
HIGH*
OR
FAR*
A WOMAN
AS YOU
THINK



I SIMPLY
FOUND
A WAY TO
SURVIVE
WITHOUT
DEPENDING ON
ANYONE'S
GIFT.

I GAVE
MYSELF
TO IT...
GRABBY.



IF I
CAN LIVE
QUIETLY IN
THIS VILLAGE,
WORKING
DAY BY DAY
TO FEED
MYSELF...

...LEAVING
NO
MARK ON
ANYONE'S
LIFE...





THEN
TAKE THIS
FOR A
DOCTOR.



I STILL
WANT YOU
BACK IN THE
ATTORNEY
THAT
HAIN'T
CHANGED.



I'LL
SAY
NO
MORE.



BUT...
AT VERY
LEAST
TAKE CARE
OF YOUR
HEALTH.

SPYCHICAL
MADE.





I...
HOW...
OH...

H-HOW
HAVE
YOU
BEEN?
ANYTHING
NEW?



NOT
MUCH.

NO,
WAIT.



ACTUALLY,
I JUST
TOOK
A WIFE.



WATER
.....
OH...











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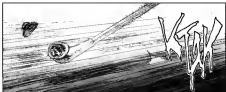


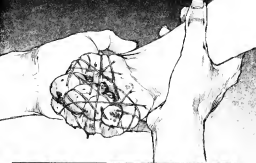
MIRROR OF THE SOUL

Part 2











I DON'T
CARE
IF
I CAN'T!

NO...
NO!
THAT'S
HOW IT
HAD TO
BE!



IT...
IT AIN'T
TIL OH...
OH YOU'LL
NEVER SEE
ME AS
JUST...

...JUST A
PERSON.



OH,
KAGOME-
SAMA...!
I... I'VE
FAILED AT
EVERY-
THING.

LIVING.
DYING...















AH...
SHE...
SHE DON'T
COME.



OF
COURSE...
SHE STILL
WON'T
FORGIVE ME...?
NO...IT'S
GONE...

IT'S
ENOUGH
THAT
YOU'RE
HERE.



I HAVE
SOMETHING...
I WANTED
TO GIVE FUEL
WHEN I
SAW HER
AGAIN...

WELL
HE
SET IT
FIRE...

I SEE...
YES.



AH...

HERE
IT IS.



SHE WORE
IT IN HER
HAIR...
THE DAY WE
WERE
MARRIED.

IT'S A
FINE THING,
MOTHER OF
PEARL INLAY ...

IT'S ALL BLACK
WITH JEWELRY IN.
1997



I... I
COULD
NEVER
LET
THAT
GO.



I... I SOLD
EVERYTHING
ELSE TO GET
MONEY,
BUT...



...I
COULD
NEVER
LET
THAT
GO.



AM
AM I...?
FURRY,
BUT IT...?

IT WAS
FATE
WE LOST
YOUR
BROTHER.

AND
AFTER YOU
AND YOUR
MOTHER
WENT AWAY,
I STAYED
WITH THE
HUTENCHA-
RYU.



I WANTED
TO START A
SCHOOL OF
MY OWN...
BUT MY OWN
DREAMS... BUT...
IT DIDN'T
WORK OUT.

AND
NOW...
SEE HOW
I'VE
FALLEN.

STOP
IT.

I WAS
WANDERING
THROUGH
THIS TOWN
WHEN CON-
SUMPTION
STRUCK ME.



ALONE...
ALONE ALL
THESE YEARS.
I KNOW
I BROUGHT IT ON
MYSELF...
I KNOW IT WAS
SELF-CENTERED
OF ME. BUT...
BUT...

THERE
WASN'T A
WAY SOME-
BY I DIDN'T
DREAM YOU'D
SOMEHOW HEAR
ABOUT ME,
AND COME
HELP.



STOP
IT!!

WHY...
WHAT A
GOOD CHILD.
YOU ARE
SUCH A
GOOD
CHILD!

FATHER
FATHER



FATHER
...?



THE
COMB...
I'LL
TAKE IT.

AND I
PROMISE...
I'LL GIVE IT TO
MOTHER.

ALONG
WITH YOUR
WORDS.



OH...
??

OH!
YOU
WALK IN



AM
H...
MAKE!

YOU'VE
GROWN
UP SO
BEAUTY-
FUL...
JUST LIKE
MOTHER



NEXT
TIME YOU
COME,
I'LL
BUY YOU
A COMB
JUST LIKE
HERE!

SO
GROW
YOUR
HAIR
OUT,
MAKE!



OH
AND HAVE
PLANT
COME
WITH YOU!
YES!

THAT
WOULD BE
GOOD *ENOUGH*!
THERE ARE
THINGS I'VE
WANTED TO TELL
YOU BOTH
FOR TWENTY
YEARS...

SO MANY
THINGS...

A
WONDERFUL
OF
THINGS!



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MIRROR OF THE SOUL

Part 3





...RIGHT?



IF...
IF YOU'RE
REALLY
LEAVING...
PROMISE
ME.

WHAT
YOU
SAID...



HAVE
FUN...

...COME
BACK
TO
ME...

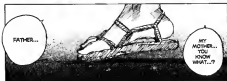


YES.

ABSOLUTELY.
I..



...I'LL BRING
MOTHER
TO THE VILLAGE
WHERE
MY FATHER
LIVES...



FATHER...

MY
MOTHER...
YOU
KNOW
WHAT...?













I
SHOULD
NEVER HAVE
GONE THERE.
AND IF I
HAD
TO GO...

...I SHOULD
NEVER
HAVE
HESITATED.
NOT ONE
MOMENT.



AT
THAT
INSTANT...

...THE
LAST
REASON,
THE ONLY
REASON
I COULDN'T
PUT DOWN
THE
SWORD...



...WAKAZENA.



I...**TO**
PLANNED,
AFTER
KILLING
HIM...

...**TO KILL**
MYSELF,
THEN AND
THERE.



MY
BROTHER,
MY BROTHER,
ALL THOSE
OTHER
INNOCENT
PEOPLE...

NEVER
~~EXPERIENCED~~
THE MISFORTUNE
I BROUGHT
THEM.
THE MISFORTUNE
MY **BLADES**
BROUGHT
THEM...



BUT
THOSE
BLADES...

OH,
GOD...
THE
MEAD...



...AND
MY
HEART
THREW IT
ALL
AWAY.

AND
THE ONE
AND ONLY
PERSON I
SHOULD
HAVE
KILLED...







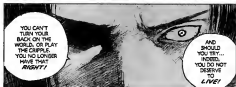
IF
YOU'RE
GUILTY
OF ANY
SIN...

...THE
FUCKERS
WOULD
ERASE IT...



WE ARE
READY!
ONLY THE
SWORD
CAN PAY FOR
THE SIN
OF THE
SWORD!

ACCEPT IT!
YOU'VE
CROSSED
THE LINE...
STEPPED
INTO THE
WHIRLPOOL.



YOU CAN'T
TURN YOUR
BACK ON THE
WORLD. OR PLAY
THE CRIPPLE.
YOU NO LONGER
HAVE THAT
RIGHT!

AND
SHOULD
YOU TRY...
HONOR.
YOU DO NOT
DESERVE
TO
LIVE!







CONSIDER
EACH
MOMENT OF
PAIN
AS YOUR
PENANCE...

...FOR
ALL
YOU
PLUNGED
INTO
SORROW.



~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~



ARE  
YOU  
READY?

THE...

.....













MY FIRST  
AND  
GREATEST  
MASTER...

I WILL  
NEVER  
FORGET THE  
DAY YOU  
SAVED  
ME...



...FOR  
THE  
VERY  
FIRST  
TIME...

...THE  
BEAUTY  
OF THE  
STORMS



I WILL  
NEVER  
NEVER  
LET  
IT BE  
WASTED...

...THE  
GIFT  
ONLY  
YOU  
CAN  
WIELD















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**LIGHT AND SHADOW**





BUT...  
JUST  
OUT OF  
THE  
BLUE?

Oh...  
I guess  
not.



BUT  
HOW?  
PI

WE  
ATE THE  
SAME  
FOOD...  
WHY  
JUST  
YOU PI



...I STILL  
SEE NO  
REASON...

IDIOT!  
YOU GET  
TITANUS FROM  
ARCHANGELS.  
NOT FOOD!  
BUT EVEN SO...



Oh...?  
WHAT...  
GH?

NO. WAIT...  
THERE  
IS  
ONE...



"TWO  
DAYS  
AGO...?"



I CAN'T  
BELIEVE IT...  
THAT  
LITTLE  
SCRATCH  
BY

YES  
I KNOW.

UNLESS  
YOU'RE  
INCREDIBLY  
UNLUCKY,  
A SWORD CUT  
*SHOULDN'T*  
CAUSE  
THIS.



BUT  
THERE IS  
A WAY TO  
*IMPROVE*  
THE  
ODDS.

IT WAS A  
COMMON  
TRICK,  
BACK IN THE  
DAYS OF  
CIVIL  
WAR...



"SOAK  
YOUR SWORD  
ON SPEAR IN  
A PIT TOILET  
OVERNIGHT.  
Wipe LIGHTLY,  
AND  
SHEATH.



"OF  
COURSE,  
IT DULLS  
AND  
RUINS  
THE  
BLADE.

"BUT IN  
RETURN YOU  
GET A DEADLY  
WEAPON FOR  
DELIVERING  
*PESTILENCE*  
TO YOUR  
FOES.



"ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD,  
AN ILL OR  
INJURED FOE  
CAN BE MORE  
VALUABLE TO  
YOU THAN A  
DEAD ONE.

"THE SICK  
PERSON  
TIES UP HIS  
COMRADES  
AS WELL."





SO,  
HOW  
ABOUT  
IT?

ISN'T  
THIS THE  
PERFECT  
CHANCE...?



IF YOU  
WANT TO  
KILL  
SOMEONE  
YOU  
NORMALLY  
COULDN'T  
BEAT...

...WHAT  
BETTER  
TIME THAN  
WHEN  
HE'S  
SICK?



MAYBE SO,  
BUT...  
NOT NOW.

I  
UNDERSTAND  
NOW, I  
WISH I'D DO  
DAYDREAMS  
WOULDN'T  
CUT IT ANY  
MORE.



I MEAN,  
HONESTLY  
SPEAKING?  
I THINK,  
IF I TRAINED  
AND TRAINED  
FOR TEN  
YEARS OR  
SO...

...THEN  
PROBABLY...  
I *STILL*  
WOULDN'T  
FIND  
A CHANCE  
AGAINST  
YOU.



OR,  
ANYWAY...  
UGH...  
HEH...

...NOT  
AS LONG  
AS YOU  
CAN  
RELAX.



*BUT!*  
IF THAT  
TENSE  
STUFF  
GETS  
WORSE...

...AND  
YOU CAN'T  
EVEN  
GET UP...  
THEN...  
WHO  
WONDS?



I'M IN  
NO RUSH.  
I'VE GOT  
LOTS OF  
TIME...

NO  
POSING  
ANY MORE...  
JUST  
BEING THERE.  
THAT'S  
ME.



AH...  
AN  
HONEST  
GIRL.







YOU  
NOTICED  
...?

THAT'S WHY I  
CAN TELL IT'S  
**LOCKDOWN**.  
AS THE DISEASE  
PROGRESSES,  
IT AFFECTS THE  
MUSCLES OF  
THE JAW.  
EVENTUALLY...  
WON'T BE ABLE  
TO TALK  
AT ALL.



OH...  
**LOCK-  
DOWN**?

I'VE  
HEARD  
OF  
THAT.



BUT...  
I DON'T  
GET IT.

FOR  
SOMEONE  
RAISED IN  
A **SAMURAI**  
HOUSEHOLD,  
YOU SURE KNOW  
A LOT ABOUT IT.  
I MEAN, DON'T IT  
A **PEASANT'S** DISEASE...?

AS  
I TOLD  
YOU...



...IT IS A  
**HERARCHY**  
OF **WAR**.  
AND I...HAVE  
STUDIED WAS  
ALL MY  
LIFE.

THE  
CORE  
PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE  
**ITTO-NO**  
IS...  
"WHATEVER  
WORKS."



SO I...

.....

.....







YES...THE  
FRONT FACE  
OF OUR  
ATTACKERS.



WH...  
WHAT  
DO WE  
DO?

HIDE  
UNTIL  
THEY  
LEAVE?



.....  
.....

NO...  
NO  
HOPE-  
LESS.



FOR...  
VARIOUS  
REASONS.

...THEY  
HAVE  
NOWHERE  
TO GO  
HOME  
TO.



I'M SURE  
THEY'VE  
STAKED OUT  
EVERY ROUTE...  
THEY'LL CHASE  
ME ALL THE  
WAY TO  
EDO.

AND AS  
WEAKENED  
AS I AM  
NOW...CAN'T  
POSSIBLY  
BURY THEM  
ALL.



SOMETHING,  
SOME-  
WHERE...  
I'LL **ARRIVE**  
TO FIGHT.

SO IT  
MUST TO  
BE **ARRIVE**  
AND **ARRIVE**...  
WHILE I  
CAN STILL  
**ARRIVE!**



BUT...  
CAN  
YOU STILL  
**ARRIVE?**



I...  
I  
DON'T  
KNOW.



THESE  
AREN'T MEN  
I COULD  
TAKE IN A  
SINGLE  
BREATH...

...EVEN  
AT THE  
**BEST**  
OF  
TIMES.



AND NOW,  
I'LL  
FACE THEM  
ONE BY ONE...  
I'LL RUN OUT  
OF ENERGY  
BEFORE  
THEY'RE ALL  
DOWN.

SHESH...  
YOU'RE  
AWFULLY  
**CALM**  
ABOUT IT.

SO...  
THAT  
MEANS IT'S  
**HOPE-  
LESS?**



NO...  
THERE'S  
STILL ONE  
**POSSIBLE**  
PATH TO  
VICTORY.

REMEMBER...  
WHAT  
I SAID IN  
THE  
**CAVE?**





HE AINT GONNA BE  
MOVIN' TOO  
FAST...  
NOT WITH  
LOCALS HERE.

AND  
EVEN IF HE  
COULD, HE  
KNOWS WE'D  
BLOCK ALL  
THE PATHS  
TO EDO.



JUST  
WASTED  
EFFORT. AND  
HE DOESN'T  
WASTE  
EFFORT.  
NOT THAT  
GUY.

THAT'S  
THAT'S



GEZ...  
TEN DAYS  
AGO WE WERE  
JUST RUNNING  
AROUND  
ON TATSUMI,  
SWINGING  
BOMBS TO  
ALL DRY.

HOW'D  
WE END UP  
LIKE  
THIS?!

SEET?!  
I FIGGIN'  
TOLD  
YOU  
GUYS!

"THAT  
DUDE FROM  
EDO IS  
BAD NEWS,  
MAN!"  
I TOLD YA!



WILL  
YOU  
ASSHOLES  
JUST  
SHUT  
UP?!

OKAY  
...?!



NOW  
REMEMBER  
WHEN YOU  
SEE THE  
BASTARD,  
NO  
SHOOTING  
OFF!

MASS  
ATTACK  
TOGETHER!



THIS  
ISN'T  
A *GRUPE*,  
IT'S A  
*FUNERAL*!

WE'VE  
*GOT* TO  
TAKE HIM,  
OUTCLASSED  
OR  
*NOT*.



OHAY,  
OHAY...

OHAY...



HUNT?

WHAT'S  
WITH THAT  
*BROAD*  
...?



























WE'LL  
FIND YOU!  
WE'LL  
GET  
YOU!

WE'LL  
KILL  
YOU.  
ANOTSU  
KAGEHISA

!!



ANOTSU,  
YOU  
SURPRISED  
ME.

WHY?



THAT  
RISKY  
STRATEGY...

I DIDN'T  
THINK  
YOU'D  
AGREE SO  
EASILY.



AFTER  
ALL... IF  
I COULDN'T  
KILL THEM  
ALL, AND THEY  
GOT AWAY,  
WHY SHOULD  
YOU  
CARE?





WELL,  
YEAH...  
THAT'S  
TRUE  
FOR SURE.

SO...  
HAPPY?  
I WONDER?  
MAYBE...



...TALK  
IT'D  
PISSE  
ME  
OFF!

YOU  
GETTING  
YOURSELF  
ALL LIT WHEN  
IT DIDN'T HAVE  
ANYTHING  
TO DO WITH  
MY STUFF!



YOU  
KNOW...  
YOU'RE  
SOME PIECE  
OF WORK,  
GIRL.

WHY,  
TAKAHARA  
YOU SEE  
SO VERY  
MUCH!



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CROSSROADS











AND SO...  
ALL  
GATHERED HERE  
TODAY, AND  
*ESPECIALLY*  
THE GENTLEMEN  
OF THE  
*ITTO-RYU!*

WE MEET  
FOR THE  
FIRST TIME.

I AM  
*AKABANE!*  
*AKABANEKUNO,*  
THE NEW  
*SHOGUN!*

*AKABANEKUNO:* HEAD OF THE *AKABANE.*



WE OF THE  
*AKABANE*  
OFFER OUR  
PROFOUNDEST  
THANKS...

...FOR YOUR  
GRACIOUS  
AID IN THE  
ESTABLISHMENT  
OF  
OUR NEW  
*AKABANE!*



NOW, IF  
THIS WAS  
ONE OF  
OUR STIFF  
*SHOGUN*  
AFFAIRS...

...I MIGHT  
*EXPONDED*  
UPON THE  
DECLINE OF THE  
*SHOGUN*  
*SPRINT*  
THESE DECADES  
PAST.



BUT...

IT'S ASSURED  
TO BRING  
ON WITH A  
*FULL CLAP*  
IN MY  
HAND

*ESPECIALLY*  
WHEN I  
SEE SOME  
*CHOKES*  
AT THE  
READY!



I DEEPLY  
REGRET THAT  
THE *ITTO-RYU*'S  
LEADER, ANOTSU  
*KAGEHISA-*  
*AKANE,*  
COULD NOT  
JOIN US.



YET IF  
OUR  
HEARTFELT  
LITTLE  
PEAST  
PROVIDES...

...AN  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO STOKES  
THE FIRES AND  
FLESH OF YOU  
WILD WARRIORS,  
WHAT MORE  
COULD  
I ASK?

**DIG  
IN!!**



*Yon*



HEY, BIG  
SPEND-  
ER!

"BIG  
SPENDER" ...?  
NOT I. BUT  
BROOGLY.  
AUTOMAT-  
ICALLY...



...IS  
THIS  
REALLY  
ACCEPT-  
ABLE?

I REPEL  
OF COURSE.  
TO THE  
ABSENCE  
OF  
ANOTHER  
JOHN.



DON'T  
GIVE HIM  
ANOTHER  
THOUGHT,  
HARASHI-  
JONG!

IT'S *HIJIKI*'S  
FAULT FOR  
NOT BEING  
BACK WHEN  
HE SAID  
HE'D BE.

YET...  
WE COULD  
HAVE  
RESCHED-  
UL-ED...



NO,  
NO.

WHY WASTE  
MORE OF  
YOUR BUDGET?  
KASEHISA  
DOESN'T CARE  
ABOUT THINGS  
LIKE THIS.



I UNDER-  
STAND  
MANY HAVE  
DESIGNS ON  
ANOTSU-  
JONG'S  
LIFE.

PERHAPS  
THIS  
TRIP AS  
WELL...?



AND I HEAR  
YOU AND  
YOUR PEOPLE  
WENT TO  
CONSIDERABLE  
PAINS WHEN  
HE LEFT FOR  
KASAY?

YES...  
YES...  
ALL TRUE.  
HOWEVER...



YOU SEE,  
HARASHI-  
JONG?...  
THE REASON  
WE CAN KICK  
BACK LIKE  
THIS AND  
ENJOY...  
...

...IS  
BECAUSE WE  
KNOW OUR  
BOSS'S  
*SHINJIRO ARIMA*  
DESERVES ALL  
THE TRUST WE  
PUT IN IT.





I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.  
I'M ALWAYS GETTING ON OUR YOUNGLING CASE ABOUT THAT.

BUT I WAS  
PRETTY FULL  
OF MYSELF,  
TOO, WHEN  
I WAS  
YOUR AGE.



FORTY-  
EIGHT.

SO FORTY-  
NINE?  
I'M  
SIXTY-  
FIVE.

BY THE  
WAY...  
HOW OLD  
WERE YOU  
HUSBAND-  
JONDO?



HEHE...  
YES...I SEE  
PERHAPS A  
MEASURE OF  
CONSPIRACY  
ISN'T BAD  
WHEN YOU'RE  
YOUNG.  
NO,  
CERTAINLY  
NOT!

YET TO STRUT  
ABOUT IN  
ARROGANCE  
WHEN YOUR SKILL  
CAN'T BEGIN TO  
MATCH THOSE OF  
THE WARRIORS OF  
OLD APPEARS  
WORTHY...  
TERRIBLE.



MUSH-  
ROOM  
AND  
PERRIN TIP  
AND/OR

HEHE...  
DUE TO  
CROWD!  
WHAT  
IS IT?



ANYWAY,  
THAT'S  
WHY--AND I'D  
WANT TO?

EXCUSE  
ME...  
THE BATH  
ROOM.















BUT IT'S  
OVER, RIGHT?  
YOU'VE REACHED  
THE SAND, RIGHT?  
YOU'LL NEVER  
RECOVER FROM  
THAT DISEASE UNLESS  
YOU GET SOME  
DROPT  
FOOD AND  
SHELTER.

BUT WE  
CAN'T EVEN  
USE A  
*FLORHOUSE*  
OR THEY'LL  
TRACK US  
DOWN.



AND  
YOU'LL  
STILL HAVE  
TO FIGHT  
THEM,  
SOMEWHERE,  
SOMEDAY.  
BEFORE  
WE REACH  
EDO.

WILL  
YOU PROVE  
THE TIME?  
I DON'T  
KNOW! SO  
YOU CAN'T  
EVEN SAYING  
YOUR  
ALREADY!



...IT'S  
NOT  
NEEDING.



NOW,  
THAT'S  
STUFF...

IT'S  
*SHIT!*

*BEFORE A POISON DETRACT OF MEMORIOR*







HEH...  
YOU'RE  
HOPE-  
LESS...!

SO BE IT!  
THEN I'LL  
WATCH  
OVER YOU...  
TO YOUR  
END.

TO BE CONTINUED

# GLOSSARY



**bakufu** a military arm of early Japanese government, concerned primarily with military and police matters. Also referred to as the "militarist government," because soldiers lived in tents.

**bangashira** head of the bushi

**banshi** officers serving under the Shogun, usually assigned to Edo castle to defend the Shogun himself

**bokuto** a sword made of wood

**buso** a poison made by sun-drying the root of the *goshokuto* (*Monochoad*) plant

**dōjō** a hall for martial arts training; here centers for swordsmanship

**dome** a very polite honorific indicating much respect

**domo** a feudal domain

**itō-ryū** the radical sword school of Anzai Kagekasa

**Kaga** a remote feudal domain on the Japan Sea coast southwest of Edo

**kenshi** a swastika (or swastika-like), not necessarily born into the samurai caste

**kōshinjō** sword school established by the Shogunate

**Musashi-ryū** the famed school led by Minamoto no Yoritomo

**misu** a Japanese dish mixing fish or vegetables with miso, rice vinegar, sesame seeds, and other ingredients

**ri** old Japanese unit of measurement equivalent to 2.44 miles

**ryū** a sword school

**shōhe** a respected, official instructor

**tatami** a thick, rice straw mat used as flooring in traditional Japanese households, still commonly found in at least one room of a residence even today